JULY–AUGUST 1960

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# The Reformed Journal

A PERIODICAL OF REFORMED COMMENT AND OPINION

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WHITHER AFRICA? *Harry R. Boer*

THE STATUS OF CATHOLICS IN THE AMERICAN COLONIAL PERIOD *Peter Hoekstra*

A RE-EVALUATION OF THE TRINITY SEASON *James O. Handley, Jr.*

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The Reformed Journal

A PERIODICAL OF REFORMED COMMENT & OPINION

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*Editorial Board*

HENRY STOB, HARRY R. BOER, JAMES DAANE
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*Publisher*

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AS WE SEE IT 3

WHITHER AFRICA? 5
Dr. Harry R. Boer, *Christian Reformed Church Missionary, Theological College, Northern Nigeria*

THE STATUS OF CATHOLICS IN THE AMERICAN COLONIAL PERIOD 8
Dr. Peter Hoekstra, *Professor of History and Political Science, Emeritus, Calvin College*

A RE-EVALUATION OF THE TRINITY SEASON 12
Rev. James O. Handley, Jr., *Christian Reformed Minister, New Richmond, Michigan*

THE RELATION OF THE BIBLE TO SCIENCE 14
Mr. Clifton J. Orlebeke, *Assistant Professor of Philosophy, Calvin College*

THE ARGUMENT FROM REVELATION TO INFALLIBILITY 18
Dr. Dewey J. Hoitenga, Jr., *Instructor in Philosophy, Junita College, Huntingdon, Pennsylvania*

PRESSURE TOWARD CONFORMITY 22
Rev. Elco H. Oostendorp, *Minister of the Second Christian Reformed Church, Allendale, Michigan*

LETTERS 24

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## *In This Issue*

Dr. Harry Boer writes a very timely article on the exciting challenge and mission that faces the Christian church in Africa. This challenge and mission is dramatically thrown up by recent events in the Congo and elsewhere in Africa.

Dr. Peter Hoekstra gathers an abundance of striking evidence to show that at one time in America Roman Catholics were very seriously regarded as a menace to individuals, and to church and state.

The Rev. James Handley again urges Reformed churches to make practical use of the vast liturgical treasure of classical Christianity. He specifically suggests what a Reformed Christian year of religious events might look like.

Professor Clifton Orlebeke points up some of the difficulties in relating the Bible to science.

Dr. Dewey Hoitenga, Jr., concludes his discussion of Biblical infallibility by setting forth the argument which, in his opinion, is the only one that can provide a firm basis for infallibility.

The Rev. Elco Oostendorp alerts the church to the great pressure toward conformity that social forces exert upon her and her members.

# As We See It

## Synod on TCNN

One way of dividing people into classes is to separate the optimists from the pessimists. The difference between them is commonly illustrated by reference to a glass partially filled with water. The optimist calls the glass half-FULL; the pessimist calls it half-EMPTY. They refer, of course, to the same glass, filled to the same degree.

The "half-full" or "half-empty" evaluation can be applied to much of life. So, too, many of the same "acts" of an ecclesiastical Synod, Christian Reformed or other, can be received with optimism by one and its opposite by another.

Moreover, each commentator on the deeds of Synod is tempted to evaluate them in the light of those hopes with which he anticipated its decisions; so that the commentator could be twice removed from the real import of what has been decided, once by his disposition and again by his wishes.

It is well, therefore, for the reader to keep clearly distinct two factors in any commentary: first, the decisions themselves; and second, the estimate of them.

These are the decisions of the Christian Reformed Synod, 1960, regarding the Theological College of Northern Nigeria:

1. No special gift fund for TCNN is to be established.
2. Synod's promise in 1958 to the Benue Church of a contribution to the capital expenses of TCNN is to be met, without construing this gift as further participation in the School.
3. Up to 60 percent of the expenses incurred by indigent students in training at TCNN will be met from special funds made available to our Nigerian mission.

We regard these TCNN decisions, as we did those made by Synod of 1959, with optimism. They evidence affirmative, effective action, and will be felt in Nigeria.

Even now, two score of our Christian brethren in Nigeria are one year further along in the advanced study and comprehension of the fundamental truths of the Christian faith than they were at the time of our last comment on TCNN. And this gain has been made under the leadership provided by our denomination in the life of this school. How soon, as the years go, will the ripened youths be themselves the fruit of work done at Gindiri, work in which we too "participate." How soon will their public witness in that dark land to our common faith in our one risen Lord be the test by which the Theological College will come to be truly known. And only one year away lies the promised visit of two Nigerian converts, who will tell Synod, 1961, of what our "participation" in all forms of mission work in Nigeria has meant to them, and to the cause of Christ in the world.

The full significance of Synod's decisions, we repeat from one year ago, will only be wrought out in history. To discern to any degree what this development might be is the only true guide to their "meaning."

What did Synod, 1960, do for TCNN?

It followed, did it not, the pattern laid down by Synod of 1959 for our relationship with institutions not of our own making and control. We can, Synod of 1959 declared, "participate" in such institutions "only to . . ." a defined extent.

Is this not truly a fruitful principle ?!

Is it not, indeed, fruitful precisely because it is a creative approach to this difficult and perpetual problem?!

How do you choose your own "participations" in daily life?

When we buy gasoline, food, clothing, appliances, and amusements at dealer "A" instead of at dealer "B", do we not quite deliberately "participate" in the organizations which have been created by others to vend these commodities? Surely we do "participate" to "the extent" of our financial contribution to them — specifically to the extent of their profit on each transaction.

When we vote, we deliberately "participate" in a form of government by freely accepting one of its fundamental privileges, and in addition we share in the conduct of the elected officials who gained office by our support "to the extent" that we do not oppose them.

And so on. Our "participation" in professional, labor, and employer's organizations is always "to the extent" that conscience endorses.

Unqualified "participation" which has no "extent" we take to be heedless or dictated behavior. We recognize one of the blessings of liberty to be that the kind and "extent" of our "participation" in some of the myriad institutions which constitute the framework of our daily life is in some real measure subject to our discrimination. "Participation to the extent that . . ." is the only kind of *responsible* participation that there is: and we bless the freedom which makes such decision at least partially our own.

So it is, then, with our denominational participation in TCNN.

We "participate" in the School said Synod of 1959 "only to the extent . . ." of loaning at our expense a teacher-principal. And now we follow this first contribution with another, and with the promise of a continuing third contribution in the support of indigent students "until a Reformed Theological Seminary has been established."

It is no doubt puzzling to the Nigerian Christians why we should wish to construe the decisions of 1960 as no further "participation" in TCNN. Why we do so will be the subject of a later piece in this *Journal*. But is it not more precise to construe the deeds of 1960 as elaboration of the principle set down in 1959? Can we not better understand our official denominational conduct in this matter as simply a faithful guide to, as well as mirror of, our own best personal conduct in similar confrontation with institutions which merit or, under the circumstances, require our "participation to the degree that . . ."?

We share today, as members of this denomination, more abundantly, more vibrantly in the dynamic of awakening Africa. We are giving now of our *men* and of our *money* in an effort to guide that dynamic aright.

Such seemingly tentative advance into active influence in a part of the world which cries for all-out efforts disturbs some as being excessively cautious, distresses others as hazardous, and heartens most of us with hopes for tomorrow. The glass is half-Empty, half-Full, or just "half," depending on the point of view.

If Synod did not do all that we may have hoped it would do, should we not learn from this fact the fruitful lesson that God's ways with our Church are not necessarily mandated upon our own? If this we do learn, our patience will be sustained and the temptation to barrage Synod of 1961 with overtures designed to bend it to our views will be lessened among us. And the willingness to heed each other in a spirit of unity-in-difference will be further enhanced.

Let us counsel our fears with the assurance, if we have fears, that God is "for" us, also in Nigeria; let us spur our hopes with the confidence that "participation" to a defined "extent" may well be the solution to many thorny problems of the future; and let us chasten any impatience with the reflection that for us this is a new and difficult road out of "isolation" on which *deliberate* speed will be fastest in the long run.

The facts remain the same, however viewed. The School is in operation, beset by none of the dissension predicted for it. Its students are better learned today in the fundamentals of our faith than has ever been true of as many converts on this field before. And to all this we have made substantial contribution, yesterday of men and today of money, by "participation only to the extent . . ." that the Spirit has given us leave to go. He will, in due season, show us also our steps for tomorrow. —L.D.K.

# Prescription for Heart Disease

In order to acquire a heart disease in the minimum of time and in the process to alienate one's family promptly, young ministers are advised to follow the following set of Rules recently published in the *Gereformeerd Weekblad* and here freely translated for the benefit of all:

1. Believe that the Kingdom of God is best served by attending all meetings called in the interest of religion.

2. Besides preaching twice every Sunday accept with alacrity every invitation to address mid-week meetings of interested people.

3. Believing that otherwise the Church would rapidly deteriorate, never decline an appointment to serve on some Board or Synodical Committee.

4. Always do yourself what can be done as well, and in most cases better, by others.

5. Never stay home of an evening to play with your children, and never reserve an evening in order to take your wife to a concert or outing.

6. Let all who phone your house be informed that you are always at home and available for calls between 6 and 6:30 P.M., when the family is seated at table.

7. Always, after a late evening meeting, take the Acts and Agenda home in order to study them carefully once more before retiring.

8. So arrange the program of the coming week that you may resemble the sheep-dog more than the Shepherd.

9. Be absent on the birthday of your wife or youngest daughter in order to address a Church Conference on the subject: "Pastoral Concern with the Modern Family."

10. Don't believe that the Divine Protector of Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps. —H. S.

# *Whither Africa?*

*by Harry R. Boer*

NEVER IN HUMAN HISTORY has so large a segment of humanity moved so rapidly and so massively from tribal primitivism to independent nationhood as have millions of Africans in these sixth and seventh decades of the twentieth century. The fact alone is amazing, and the general context in which the fact is taking place serves only to emphasize its extraordinary character.

Who in 1950 thought that in the sixties African states would hold a sort of balance of power in the United Nations? Who had ever heard, or thought, of Ghana, Mali, Malagasy, or the Republic of the Congo? Even Africa itself attached no significance to names like Kwame Nkrumah, Sekou Touré, Ferhat Abbas, Nasser, Abubakr Tafewa Balewa, Tom Mboya, Patrice Lumumba and Hastings Banda. Few African names said something to people outside of Africa — among them perhaps that of Nnamdi Azikiwe, the father of the nationalist movement in Nigeria, now approaching the close of his political career as the President of the Nigerian Senate. In the far south, Malan had just entered upon power, and he has since been succeeded by Strydom and his even better known successor, Hendrik Verwoerd.

### Revolution

Nearly the whole of the continent finds itself in the grip of revolutionary changes of varying intensity, and everywhere there is evident vitality and power. There are also disruptive and centrifugal forces everywhere. The primitive way of life is still the dominant fact of African society. The tribe must come to terms with the nation; emirs and chiefs with elected representatives and central governments; custom, tradition and superstition are faced by the forces of education, science and religion. What the end of all this will be no one can guess, but one thing is certain — there's nothing static about contemporary Africa.

In this article we are mainly interested in the political scene. In the far north, the two centers of tension are Egypt and Algiers. For some time now a relief-giving quiet has characterized Egypt. Nasser has consolidated his hold on power; he has not only weathered the Suez crisis but has come out of it stronger than ever; and he gathered Syria into his direct orbit of power by uniting it with Egypt to found the United Arab Republic. Tensions in the Arab world have, however, frustrated his ambition to lead an effective Pan-Arab movement, a circumstance of which Israel is a direct beneficiary.

In Algiers the unhappy five-year-old rebellion against French rule may now be coming to an end. If present plans carry, it will end with honor for both France and the rebels, for it is proposed to resolve the military stalemate with a free election that shall determine the status of Algiers. Fighting off nearsighted French colonists in Algiers, political reactionaries at home, and holding the somewhat unpredictable army in check while carefully avoiding the creation of an opportunity for it to turn against him, Charles de Gaulle is executing one of the most delicate and daring political maneuvers of contemporary history, a maneuver which, if it is blessed with success, will save untold lives and treasure, give new economic life to both France and Algiers, and contribute markedly to the stability of the Western position in world power politics.

Against the growing stability and hope of peace in the far north there stands the utterly dark picture of apartheid, more fanatically pursued than ever before, in the south. The world press has had so much to say about the South African situation that we can, after mentioning it, pass on from this prospect of unrelieved gloom to other and lesser known parts of Africa.

### *The Congo*

The rest of Africa — what many would call the real Africa, the Africa south of the Sahara and north of the Union, — may in terms of European backgrounds be roughly divided into four major areas; the areas coming respectively out of Belgian, French, Portuguese, and British colonial effort. Our main interest, because of the profound lessons which it teaches, will be the Belgian Congo.

In 1956 Stuart Cloete, the South African writer, wrote a book after a long tour through Central, West, and East Africa, entitling it *The African Giant*. It tells all that is dreary, hopeless, pessimistic, and discouraging about the Africa of the past and the Africa of today. It fails quite to recognize the elments of hopefulness and encouragement that are everywhere discernible. Christianity, the Church, and the work of missions are scarcely mentioned. The interest of the book lies in the manner in which it is able to make the sordid and the depressing side of African life fascinate the reader. From all I can judge, little or nothing that Cloete says is untrue, but because all he says is only half the truth the book is essentially a misrepresentation.

Bearing this in mind, we read as of special interest today what he has to say about his visit to the Congo, the essence of which is neatly distilled in this brief excerpt of Cloete's interview with the Belgian Governor General:

> Everything the Governor-General said was optimistic — the ten-year plan. The North was developed and going well. He was about to concentrate on the South; to move his best men, to attack the great rolling plains we had crossed and see what would grow there. Something would grow. But certainly, something. Optimism is necessary in Africa — optimism, patience and a belief in God. Beyond this, energy, stamina and the ability to resist heat, disease and the terrible lassitude which destroys the very fibres, physical and moral, of Western man.
>
> The conversation ended when I said: "Your Excellency, what would happen if the white man left the Congo? How long would it last?"
>
> "A few years," he said, "because we have built well. The buildings will stand."
>
> "And then?" I said.
>
> "Then, monsieur, the forest will return."
>
> This is the classic reply all over the continent. There is no other answer (pp. 309, 310).

Is this coming true in the Congo today? One fears it. Patrice Lumumba, the Prime Minister, and Joseph Kasavubu, the President, represent forces that must inevitably meet and grapple to the death. Lumumba repsesents the force making for centralized power — the only thing that can save the Congo from fragmentation and tribal war; Kasavubu finds his base of power in Bakongo tribal loyalties that even overflow into French and Portuguese territory. There is already talk of cession; in the south a section has set up a rival government, and there is a rival to this rival. At this very time of writing (July 11) the army is in revolt, all European officers have been dismissed or are to be dismissed, the rich Katanga province in the south is reported to have called on Rhodesian troops to help restore order, thousands of whites are fleeing to the nearest border from Angola to Uganda, and Belgium is sending paratroops into the country that less than two weeks ago saw the official transfer of power presided over by none less than King Baudoin. What happens from here on in? No one is willing to predict twenty-four hours ahead.

What is the reason for this state of things? It is not in the first place the fault of the African. Of that we may be fairly certain. There is no good reason why the stability which in general characterizes the former British and French territories cannot also obtain in the Congo. It is artificial boundaries, not racial characteristics, that separate the Congolese from the Bantu and Sudanese peoples in other parts of Africa. The fault would seem to lie in Belgian colonial policy. Like the Dutch in Indonesia and the French in Indo-China and the Portuguese in East and West Africa, Belgian policy emphasized educational (lower, not higher) social, and economic aspects of life while not simultaneously forging a framework in which the inalienable and insupressible human instinct to rule self could find political expression. That instinct is now expressing itself in the Congo with an explosiveness and immaturity that has hardly a parallel in modern history. Three years ago — all peace and quiet. Today — independence, a prime minister who two years ago was a postal clerk, a legislative assembly that does not know how to make laws, a government that has few career men, altogether inadequately staffed lower echelons no longer under the final supervision and discipline of expert Europeans, powerful tribes and leaders fearing the effect of democratic processes on their positions, weaker but more numerous tribes regarding "freedom" as bringing surcease from all bondage and inequality, and the Europeans who helped to create this happy situation fleeing the ship before open anarchy sets in.

Pray for the Congo, Christian reader. Pray for the fourteen millions among whom most do not know their right hand from their left. Pray for the Protestant and Roman Catholic churches and mission work whose fruits of love, godly fear, morality and justice under law may yet prove to be the salvation of this great and strategic area.

### From Colony to Nation

The French under the leadership of De Gaulle and after having learned costly lessons in Indo-China and Algiers are following a more promising policy in the French territories in West and Central Africa. These were given the choice of remaining in their colonial status, of entering upon independence within the French community, or of complete independence. The choice is being made for independence within the French community, except in the case of Guinea, which under the bold and ambitious Sekou Touré has chosen complete severance of ties with France. No longer able to find the wherewithal for his national economy in his French connections, Monsieur Touré has been turning to eastern Europe, with the result that Guinea is now regarded as Communism's outpost in Africa. Two other French territories in West Africa, Senegal and Soudan, have implemented their independence by forming the federation of Mali, a name which, as in the case of Ghana, awakens memories of African imperial glory of the past.

Before the leftward trend in Guinea became clear, a vague "union" was contrived between Ghana and Guinea with the idea of establishing a basis for an all-West-Africa union of states and ultimately an All-Africa union. The whole thing seems to have been abortive and little more is being heard about it. Moreover, both in the former French territories, in Nigeria, and recently by President Tubman of Liberia, the idea of forming union states at this time has been discouraged. The need of the hour is for intensive work on the local level on all fronts of human endeavor. When the national economies

and political structures are stable and have proven themselves, there will be opportunity for the consideration of federation or union between existing states.

Nigeria is looking forward to complete independence in October; former trust territories in eastern Africa have merged to form the independent Republic of Somalia; Kenya is moving to independence but the prospect is troubled by an alleged resurgence of Mau-Mau oath-taking; Tanganyika is similarly moving forward; the Central Africa Federation of Northern and Southern Rhodesia and Nyassaland is troubled by charges of efforts to keep the black population from having its full voice in the nation's affairs. In Kenya, in the Rhodesias, in Algiers, in South Africa — wherever there are settled white populations there seem to be well-nigh insoluble problems of creating a truly multi-racial society. So far, the Union of South Africa is the only state that has in theory, in law, and in unambiguous practical policy announced that within its confines there shall be no multi-racial society, at least not so far as authority and privileged position of the whites is concerned.

All of Africa is in a process of becoming something other than it was. Britain put the thing in a nutshell by a classic turn of English understatement. "The winds of change," said he, "are blowing in Africa." The winds are everywhere blowing in one direction; they are irresistible, and in some parts they are or can become a holocaust. Whither Africa?

### The Church

In the midst of Africa's turmoil, and accompanying her upon every step of her uncertain way, stands the Church of Jesus Christ. As Africa looks everywhere — to British and French experience, to American capital, here and there to Communist ideology, but chiefly to herself and her own resources — for help to achieve stability, unity, peace, progress and the tranquillity of a harmonious life, should she not find these ends above all in the Church? Africa is looking with a fierce longing for the better life. She thinks to find it in acquiring the white man's affluence, his knowledge, his techniques, his gadgets. But where is the stability, the unity, the peace, the progress and the harmonious life among the whites? May we not hope that in Africa the Church will through her message and life of self-sacrifice give greater leadership than she has in the West? And amidst all the political and tribal fragmentation, may we not hope that the Church will manifest the unity for which Christ prayed and which runs as a central theme through all the writing of the New Testament and through the recorded life of the Church of the New Testament? No ta pie-in-the-sky spiritual unity which only God can see, but a visible, concrete, growing, here-and-now unity which not only the saints but also the sinners of both colors and all ideologies will be able to see. A unity that shall make them see the hopelessness and incompleteness and emptiness of all unities that do not have Christ as their center.

There be people in the West who think that the world and the Church will stand or fall with their doctrinal specialty. Not so. The Church and the eternal gospel will stand forever, and they will stand by their own power. Let us not compound the tribal rivalries of Africa by identifying some tribes with Lutheranism, some with the Reformed faith, others with Anglicanism or the Baptist view. This will be the inevitable result of comity arrangements made on the field whereby some missions went to some tribes and other missions to other tribes, if denominational and creedal viewpoints are to become ends rather than instruments in the life of the African Church.

Whither Africa? Neither the Church nor the missions and missionaries helping the Church have the answer to this question. But they can contribute to the answer by resolving that the Church shall not imitate the pride and the fear and the suspicions of the nations of the world in sealing off from each other those who in Christ belong together.

# The Status of Catholics in the American Colonial Period

*by Peter Hoekstra*

IN THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH centuries America was undoubtedly the most Protestant region to be found anywhere in the world, then or since. A few Catholics were to be found, but estimates as to their number are vague and unreliable. Some Catholic sources are inclined to overestimate.

There is no evidence that any were to be found in the Carolinas or Georgia. Only one colony from the beginning had a small nucleus of Catholics. This was Maryland, whose proprietor, Lord Baltimore, was a Catholic. He attracted a number of his co-religionists, who came to escape a mild persecution in England. Among them was a group of Jesuit priests. These were not without hope of making Maryland an exclusively Catholic colony, but in this they were to be disappointed, for the charter given to the proprietor demanded that the Church of England should be made the Established Church. The Jesuits were especially zealous and obstreperous and from time to time had to be restrained by the proprietor. By the time the Maryland Toleration Act of 1649 was passed, the Protestants there far outnumbered the Catholics. A Catholic bishop in 1763 estimated "there must be around 16,000 Catholics in Maryland," but he added that fully half of them "are negligent in the practice of their faith." Some of the Maryland Catholics became wealthy and influential and were not always excluded from the social and political life of the community.

The number in Pennsylvania was estimated in 1763 at between six and seven thousand. Their spiritual needs were usually ministered to by Jesuits from Maryland, and these also made occasional visits to the few Catholics in Virginia and West Jersey.

Massachusetts was the first colony to enact a law, in 1647, which decreed banishment for any priest or Jesuit found in its jurisdiction. This was renewed in 1700 and remained in force throughout the period. A second offense was punishable by death, but the death penalty never had to be inflicted. An occasional priest who came on a diplomatic mission or as a passenger on a ship was careful not to prolong his stay. Two other colonies, New York, and Virginia, had laws almost identical in wording with that of Massachusetts. No doubt, in consequence, none of these three colonies ever had any *resident* priests, and this holds also for New England colonies other than Massachusetts.

New England had such a variety of detailed regulations, too numerous to mention here, that, theoretically, every Catholic should have been excluded; yet a few found their way into this stronghold of Puritanism. Gershom Bulkeley states, about 1688, "We are all Protestants — I hope there is not a Papist in our limits." A contemporary of his estimates that there were less than ten Catholics in New England by the end of the seventeenth century. Ships from a friendly power brought to port an occasional Catholic sailor, who might stay a few weeks or even be allowed to remain indefinitely. Others, against their will, came as the victims of war.

The generations which founded New England lived very close in time to the European wars of religion and had distinct memories of the Inquisition. To them the four wars with France in which the colonies took part prior to the Revolution were distinctly wars of religion. They inspired some leaders with a zeal for iconoclasm. In the War of the Spanish Succession, which resulted in the capture of the fortress of Louisburg, Parson Moody joined the troops as Chaplain and carried an axe with which to cut down the images in the churches. Parson Gray, too old to travel, apparently envied him, for he writes to a friend, "O that I could be with you and dear Mr. Moody . . . to destroy the images" in Canadian churches. One incidental result of these wars was the taking of captives by both sides.

What to do with French Catholics taken captive? These were sometimes exchanged upon return of peace, at times imprisoned for long periods, or again they might be licensed to remain. Most of these preferred to hide their religion from their Protestant neighbors, for they were under no delusion that these had any love for them. The few faithful complained that they had "no priest near them." These were at times allowed to make a trip to Canada to fulfill their religious duties.

Their total number must have been so small that most New Englanders during a lifetime never came in personal contact with a Catholic. In 1765 John Adams said that a Roman Catholic was as rare as a comet or earthquake. A decade later he wrote that there were a few in his town of Braintree but that "they dare not show themselves." Yet it is known that Boston had a Catholic church and that in one instance Catholics gathered there for Mass. Small as the number was, the inference is not warranted that they were on that account tolerated or free to lead their own lives. New England in

In every colony Roman Catholics were under suspicion. particular showed in divers ways its hostility to the teachings and practices of Catholicism, and this lends a large measure of unity to its ecclesiastical history.

IN COLONIAL BIBLIOGRAPHIES sermons bulked large, and in these and in pamphlets the clergy passed on their hatred to later generations. References to the Pope as the Antichrist and to the Church as the wicked and idolatrous Babylon became thoroughly stereotyped expressions. Auricular confession was ridiculed, and it was pointed out that there was no Scriptural basis for good works as a means of salvation, nor for indulgences, the observance of Lent, prayers for the dead, and the adoration of Mary and the saints. Typical of this means of keeping alive the hostility of the New England mind were the Dudleian lectures at Harvard, begun in 1755. According to the will of the founder, every third lecture in a series of four was to be devoted to "the detecting, convicting and exposing of the Romish church, their tyranny, usurpations, damnable heresies," etc.

Almanacs catered to the religious prejudice of the times. There were thousands in circulation; they were found in most homes and were sometimes the only reading matter beside the Bible. When they had served their purpose they were often used as a diary. Extracts from these and from the various catechisms found their way into the New England Primer in its several editions. In these and in pamphlets and newspapers several generations were nurtured on denunciations of Jesuits and French Catholics, of the Pope as "The Man of Sin," of Rome as "The Great Whore" and the "Mother of Harlots." Fantastic opinions came to be expressed and believed. Catholics were said to be more ignorant of the truth than Hottentots. In an early American play, an Indian chief is assured by a priest that God will bless a war against the English who killed his son. Christ was an Indian, and "whosoever, therefore, kills a Briton merits heaven and will be conveyed there by the angels." An educated lawyer in 1755 affirmed that the French in Canada were pursuading the Indians that the Virgin Mary was born in Paris and that "Christ was crucified by the English in London." In one form or another this accusation was oft repeated.

Traditional beliefs are apt to find expression in anniversary celebrations. One such occasion in which the general populace could vent its spleen against Catholics was the celebration of Guy Fawkes' day on November 5, the day which commemorated England's providential deliverance from the Gunpowder Plot. It was usually preceded by a Thanksgiving sermon, but the emphasis of the people came to fall on the share of the Roman Catholic Church in the nefarious plot. It was celebrated in most colonies, and in New England was known as "Pope's Day" or "Pope's Night." In smaller towns and villages the celebration was apt to be orderly, with processions, bonfires, and fireworks. Invariably there were effigies of the Pope and the devil and these were often crucified and burned.

In Boston preparations began long in advance and the day was one of much noise and rioting. Boston was not content with one procession but North- and South-end gangs each insisted on its own. Huge crowds, joined by sailors on shore leave and by the riffraff from the waterfront, followed the procession, singing anti-papal rhymes and bearing "no Popery" signs. The mobs of 1767 carried no less than twenty Popes and devils. When the two groups met, each sought to capture the other's effigies, amid battles in which stones, bricks, and cudgels served as weapons, and with considerable injury to person and property. Local and provincial authorities passed regulations to curb these excesses, but they were inadequate to stop a deep-rooted custom. Throughout the period, November 5 was a holiday.

THE DECADE PRECEDING the Revolution brought to a head the economic and political grievances against England, which need not be considered here. Among the apprehensions of the leaders was now also one of a religious character — the fear that England would finally foist on them the support of one or more Anglican bishops. Episcopacy and Prelacy were, to the New England mind in particular, only a shade less dangerous than Catholicism. If the danger of Prelacy seemed for the moment more actual, the fear of Catholicism was never absent. The outcry against Catholics continued, but in a new form or with a change of emphasis. It now came to be associated with tyranny and a forfeiture of liberty. Alice Baldwin says: "There is hardly a Massachusetts sermon of these days which does not mention liberty."[1] The clergy maintained they could not properly expound Scripture without supporting liberty. Dr. Jonathan Mayhew, to mention but one instance, concluded that Popery and liberty "are at incompatible enmity with each other." John Adams maintained that Catholicism was the worst tyranny. His cousin Sam, always less moderate in his utterances than John, began, in 1768, his "Lucubrations against Popery," in the course of which he made the oft-quoted remark that he verily believed "that more is to be dreaded from the growth of Popery in America than from the Stamp Act or any other acts destructive of man's civil rights." Men should be very careful, he warned, not to speak about Popery in the presence of youth, lest they should unwittingly learn to speak the language of The Beast.

picion and were regarded as a menace to individuals, and to church and state. Rhode Island, traditionally the home of religious freedom, gave liberty to all "except Papists." Everywhere they were forbidden to bear arms, but were none the less taxed for military service. In Virginia they could not be witnesses in any case whatsoever and were forbidden to own a horse worth more than five pounds. Nowhere could they function as guardians or administrators. Children of mixed marriages must be reared as Protestants. In New England even the baptism of Catholics was regarded as invalid. In no colony could they exercise the right of suffrage. In all the royal provinces the governors were instructed to see to it that they were excluded from civil and political life. In Maryland mass had to be conducted privately; in more tolerant Pennsylvania it could be celebrated openly, but even there the home government forced the adoption of legislation against them. These are examples of colonial legislation, which by the standards of today will be considered harsh and narrow, but which were then regarded as normal and necessary. Catholics were pariahs, with fewer rights and privileges and more to be dreaded than Communists today.

IT IS IN THE LIGHT of a century or more of colonial legislation and agitation that we must interpret the remarkable reaction throughout the colonies against the Quebec Act which England adopted in 1774, and which some historians regard as one of the main causes of the Revolution. This Act seemed to exemplify in a very concrete way the contention of the leaders that Catholicism spelled a danger to liberty. It is unique in American history, in that it brought about a concerted and well-nigh universal outburst of indignation against Catholicism, but at the same time marks the beginning of a more tolerant attitude.

The Quebec Act contained provisions regarding religious and civic liberty which were regarded as part of a plot to foist on the colonies the evils of Popery and arbitrary power. By the Proclamation of 1763, which was intended to provide a temporary government for the province of Quebec, acquired by England from France, the Roman Catholic Church had been merely tolerated and tithes for its support had been made optional. By the Act of 1774 tithes were legalized and their collection enforced (of course, only for Roman Catholics), and this seemed to give the Church of Rome the status of an established religion. The Act, moreover, greatly enlarged the boundaries of Quebec so as to include the region north of the Ohio. Ezra Stiles expressed a general concern when he said, with some exaggeration, that England thus "established idolatry over three fourths of America." It was considered unbelievable that an England, which excluded Catholics from its own Parliament and had a drastic penal code of its own against them, should thus favor the Catholics of Quebec. Why should further allegiance be due to a king who, in signing this Act, had violated his coronation oath? "No Popery" now came to be coupled with "no king." What guarantee was there that the religious provisions of the Act were not to be an entering wedge to foist the Church of Rome on the other English colonies?

The civic provisions of the Act were also considered highly objectionable. English criminal law was substituted for the French criminal code, which in itself was an improvement, for the English code was less harsh. But how could England possibly retain the French civil code intact, for this code made no provision for trial by jury, habeas corpus, and other rights dear to the hearts of Englishmen? Since the Act made no provision for a legislative assembly such as each of the thirteen colonies had, this seemed like an attempt to restore the "tyranny" which the colonies had ever associated with French Catholicism.

It is impossible to say who first began the widespread outcry against the civic and religious provisions of the Act, but the Resolves adopted by a convention in Suffolk County, Massachusetts, two days after the Act went into effect, are generally regarded as typical. One provision of these Resolves characterized the "Act for establishing the Roman Catholic religion and French laws" as "dangerous in the extreme to the Protestant religion and to the civil rights and liberties of all Americans." Paul Revere was sent post haste to Philadelphia, where the First Continental Congress had begun its sessions, to present a copy to the Massachusetts delegation. The Congress endorsed them, adopted them as its own, and asked the newspapers in every province to copy them. By that time nearly every town or county in the land was ready with resolutions of their own.

But the Congress of 1774 did more. In seeking to express the united voice of all the colonies, it issued a number of state papers in most of which the Quebec Act comes in for adverse criticism. These cannot all be analyzed here. But three of them, all adopted in a single week, call for further consideration. On October 21 it approved of an "Address to the People of Great Britain," drawn up by a descendant of Huguenots, John Jay. It is an effort to enlist the sympathies of Protestant England against their "Popish" king and Parliament. The Catholic religion, it stated, "was fraught with sanguinary and impious tenets." The Quebec Act was so alien in religious beliefs and civil government as to make it adaptable "to reduce the ancient, free, Protestant colonies to . . . slavery. . . . Nor can we suppress astonishment that a British Parliament should ever consent to establish," in Canada,

1. In *The New England Clergy and the American Revolution,* p. 109.

"a religion that has deluged your island in blood, and dispersed impiety, bigotry, persecution, murder and rebellion through every part of the world." Surely, no Catholic upon reading this document could infer that Protestant America had any love for him. Rather, this is an epitome of colonial hatreds and prejudices. On October 26 Congress signed a "Petition to the King," the second of its kind, in which the old complaint about establishing the Roman Catholic religion is repeated. On the same day it adopted an "Address to the People of Quebec."

THIS LAST "ADDRESS" is truly an amazing document, so radically different from the other two that it is almost unbelievable. In this document Canadians were warned that their religion was not secure, but was at the mercy of the crown and his ministers, who might "establish even the Inquisition among you." Parliament had not offered them liberty of conscience. "No. God gave it to you . . . . If laws human and divine could secure it against the despotic caprice of wicked men, it was secured before. . . . We are too well acquainted with the liberality of sentiment distinguishing your nation, to imagine that differences of religion will prejudice you against a hearty amity with us." Then follows an invitation to send delegates to the Continental Congress in May, and a prayer that they may see fit to unite with their "sincere and affectionate fellow subjects." The Journals of Congress indicate that this "Address" was "entered unanimously." If there were any dissenting voices the record does not show.

In two of the documents issued in that week Congress had demanded redress because Catholics were given freedom of worship in Canada. Yet in this "Address" Congress invited Catholics to join "its Confederation which has no other object than the perfect security of the natural rights of all constituent members according to their respective circumstances." Was this good diplomacy or utter stupidity? Who can possibly harmonize the tone of these documents? It is hard to clear Congress of the charge of double-dealing in this instance.

In the person of Oliver Briand the Catholics of Canada at this time had a very astute bishop. In 1773 he was invited by the Pope to visit the English colonies for the purpose of confirming priests who would otherwise have to go to Rome. But he was warned by Father Farmer, an American priest, not to go, "as the advent of a Catholic bishop would lead to riots" and cause Catholics "to lose even what little religious privileges they enjoyed." Briand was then aware of the general hostile attitude of the colonies toward Catholics. A reading of the "Address" to his Canadian friends did not change his mind. Instead, he warned his loyal *habitans* not to be seduced, and in consequence no Canadian delegates were sent to the Continental Congress.

Thus the first attempt of official America at cooperation with Catholics failed. But Congress was to try again to win over Canada and actually come to employ Catholic agents for this purpose. In the American Revolution many of the old prejudices were laid aside and Catholics were to receive a measure of toleration.

This phase of the subject will have to be developed in a subsequent article.

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# *A Re-Evaluation of the Trinity Season*

*by James O. Handley, Jr.*

MOST OF US are familiar with the fact that the liturgical churches of the West hold a festival to celebrate the Holy Trinity on the first Sunday after the Day of Pentecost. It is regarded by these churches as a fitting conclusion to the drama of Christ's redemptive acts, which include the descent of the Spirit. Trinity Sunday celebrates, as Massey H. Shepherd, Jr., explains, "the ultimate revelation of what God is throughout all eternity, Three Persons in One God" (*The Oxford American Prayer Book Commentary,* p. 186). The collect for this Festival expresses sublimely the response of the Christian Church to the Triune God revealed by Jesus Chrst:

> Almighty and everlasting God, who has given unto us thy servants grace, by the confession of a true faith, to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity, and in the power of the Divine Majesty to worship the Unity; We beseech thee that thou wouldest keep us stedfast in this faith, and evermore defend us from all adversities, who livest and reignest, one God, world without end. Amen.

Trinity Sunday stands at the beginning of a period of about six months that stretches to the first Sunday in Advent. The Lutheran and Anglican Reformers, following a development on the Continent, designated that period as Trinity Season. So one finds that their directories of worship name the consecutive Sundays after the Trinity Festival, that is, "The First Sunday After Trinity," "The Second Sunday After Trinity," etc. The Roman Catholic Church, on the other hand, names the Sundays after Pentecost. For every Sunday of the months between Pentecost and Advent, the liturgical churches have fixed collects, Epistles, and Gospels. Those prayers and lessons from the Bible are designed, generally, to enable the churches to digest more thoroughly the primary teachings of the Pentecost-to-Advent cycle. Shepherd describes the Trinity Season as a time in which "the implications of the historic revelation of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are studied and applied to the Church's inner life and outer witness" (*The Oxford American Prayer Book Commentary,* p. 186). A random sample from the Book of Common Prayer used by the Anglicans or Episcopalians is Romans 8:18-23, the Epistle for the fourth Sunday after Trinity; and Luke 6:36-42, the Gospel read in the worship of that day. The collect reads:

> O God, the protector of all that trust in thee, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy; Increase and multiply upon us thy mercy; that, thou being our ruler and guide, we may so pass through things temporal, that we finally lose not the things eternal. Grant this, O heavenly Father, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

Any Christian concerned to hear the whole counsel of God in the Scriptures read in orderly sequence Sunday after Sunday, any Christian humble enough to seek guidance in his praying from the Church's heritage of public prayers; I say, any such Christian will be strongly attracted to the Biblical prayers and lessons of the Trinity Season, as well as to the propers for the other festivals and seasons of the Christian Year. It is not surprising, then, that upon looking into Trinitytide, many leaders of non-liturgical denominations are urging the adoption of it. Three good examples are W. F. Dunkle, Jr. (*Values in the Church Year for Evangelical Protestantism*), R. Abba (*Principles of Christian Worship*), and E. Baker (*Preaching Theology*).

HOWEVER, WHILE I myself have felt the appeal of the Trinity Season and in the first flush of enthusiasm tried to observe it to some degree, I have subsequently become more critical. First of all, there is a historical or traditional objection. The Nativity-Epiphany and Pascha-Pentecost festivals with their seasons (Advent, Epiphany and Paschal) developed in the first four centuries of the Church's life. There is no denying some sort of a normative character to that period, as to the Reformation. The Reformers steeped themselves in its writers and appealed to them for support in their polemics. From the first four centuries have come the great ecumenical statements of orthodoxy used in the worship of the Reformed churches, such as the Apostles' Creed and the so-called Nicene Creed. The normative value of that period applies to liturgy as much as to doctrine; in their reforms of worship the early Protestants looked not only into the Bible, but also into the extant information about the liturgical practices of the ante-nicene and early post-nicene periods; the Helvetic Confessions of the Swiss Reformed churches recognized such festivals of the first four centuries as Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost. Clearly, those centuries represent a classical Christianity not to be overshadowed even by the Reformation era. Integral to that Classical Christianity is the Church Year as built on the celebrations of the historical saving deeds of Jesus Christ.

But it was far beyond and long after that classical, formative period of the Christian festivals that Trinity Sunday and its season appeared. In

fact, Trinity Sunday itself was instituted by Bishop Stephen of Liege as late as the tenth century. It spread quickly through the churches of the Low Countries, Germany, and England. After some resistance from the ultra-conservative papacy, the Festival became part of the Roman Catholic liturgical year in 1334 at the direction of Pope John XXII. Some medieval sacramentaries and missals (books directing worship) developed the scheme of numbering Sundays after the Trinity. This was continued by the Lutheran and Anglican Reformers, but in 1570 the Roman Catholic Church officially returned to the more ancient custom of naming the Sundays after Pentecost. This character of Trinity and its season — not being part of the Christian festivals developed in the classical period — constitutes a traditional objection to our placing it within any Christian Year we may adopt.

However, the above historical traditional judgment cannot and should not be absolute. It should simply stimulate a more critical inquiry into the legitimacy and contemporary value of a Trinity Season. Such an inquiry will uncover a major discrepancy between the primitive Christian festivals and Trinity. The former are Christological and historico-redemptive in nature. They originated in and revolve around the acts of Jesus Christ in history for the redemption of the world. In the Nativity-Epiphany cycle (Advent season) we celebrate the Old Testament preparation for Christ, His incarnation, and the glorious hope of His final advent. During Pascha-Pentecost (the Great Fifty Days) we enter into the alleluia, rejoicing in our Lord's victory over sin, death, Satan, and every other evil opposing God and the Church. In contrast to those classical Christian seasons concerned with the redemptive works of Christ on earth, the Trinity Season celebrates a doctrine, the doctrine of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in unity. But this doctrine is not *part* of the Christian faith, as is, for example, the Resurrection, but comprises the *whole* of the faith. Even Pope Alexander II (d. 1073) sensed this in opposing the Trinity Festival, because "the Holy Trinity is venerated every day" (Cardinal Giacoma Lercaro, *A Small Liturgical Dictionary,* p. 238).

In my judgment, the Trinity Season points up the need for some kind of rule to guide us in developing a modern Reformed Christian Year. Such a rule has been suggested by J. J. Von Allmen, a minister and professor of theology in the Reformed Church of France. In an article on New Testament feasts he writes:

> It is permissible to celebrate festivals in the Church, provided they emphasize that with Jesus the Messiah the kingdom of God has come, and therefore is here; these festivals cease to be permissible just as soon as they cease either to recall clearly the saving work of Jesus (Pentecost being the work of Jesus, who sends His Spirit: John 15:26), or to proclaim decisively His return in glory. In other words, Christian festivals must be first and foremost Christological . . . . Above all, it should be noted that the usefulness of Christian festivals resides in the fact that they emphasize the essential truth of Christianity — the knowledge that salvation is not an idea but a historical fact, which finds its center and its meaning in the person and work of Jesus Christ (*A Companion to the Bible,* p. 126).

If we eliminate Trinity and its season for the reasons given above, then we are confronted with the problem of what to do about the six months between Pentecost Sunday and Advent. So far as my studies have taken me, I find that the Church of the first four centuries did nothing uniform about it. Even the earliest extant lectionaries (schemes for an orderly reading of the Bible in public worship Sunday after Sunday) have no full propers for the Sundays of the period in question. Some, however, do list special services to commemorate various Apostles and local martyrs. Apparently, the classical cycle of the Church Year extended over a six-month period only; that is, from Advent to Pentecost. The primitive Christian Year was only a half year! So Trinity Season represents a medieval attempt to fill in the vacant months, and an illegitimate one, unfortunately. A modern effort in that direction has been made by A. A. McArthur, a Scottish Presbyterian minister and leading Reformed scholar on the Christian Year. Convinced that what is needed in the Protestant Church is "a new act of liturgical creation," he has prepared a very impressive lectionary constructed according to the Apostles' Creed. His Christian Year begins with a "Festival of Creation" lasting for six Sundays; that corresponds with the first Article of the Creed or the revelation of God the Father. Then follow a six-week Advent season concluded by the first Sunday after Christmas, an Epiphany period of nine weeks, a Lenten period of six inincluding Holy Week, and a seven-week season after Easter; that covers the second principal head of the Creed, dealing with the revelation of God the Son. Finally comes a Pentecostal season of nineteen Sundays concluded with two Sundays devoted to the Christian Hope; that corresponds to the third article of the Creed, which concerns the revelation of God the Holy Spirit (*The Christian Year and Lectionary Reform,* pp. 67-70).

Unless the reader lost himself in the above labyrinth, he sees that McArthur has filled up the six-month gap between Pentecost and Advent by three seasons: A pentecostal one devoted to the Church and the Christian life, an eschatological one devoted to the Christian Hope, and a creational one devoted to creation and providence. McArthur is certainly to be congratulated for such a success-

ful correlation of Christian festivals with the Creed. I do not see, however, how he escapes the criticisms we have leveled against the Trinity Season. Rather than retaining the exclusive Christological character of the primitive festivals, his whole scheme scuttles it in favor of a Trinitarian cast. Also, the classical focus on the redemptive acts of Christ is obscured. Without seeming impertinent, may I suggest what appears to be a much simpler and strictly Biblical scheme for the months from Pentecost to Advent? Suppose that we called it the Mission Season in view of the world mission that the Ascended Lord began through His Church on the Day of Pentecost. The Sundays would simply be numbered after Pentecost; such as, the First Sunday After Pentecost, the Second Sunday After Pentecost, etc. Such a plan would preserve the Christological historico-redemptive character of the Church Year as developed in the classical period. It would be in line not only with the order of events in the New Testament, but also with the actual present situation and activity of our Lord through the Spirit in the Church. Incidentally, it would also provide a needed liturgical framework for our summer witness among Mexican migrants, our traditional mission fests, and the Vacation Bible Schools. The total result of such a scheme would be a Christian Year of two balanced parts. In the first six months we would concern ourselves with our Lord's redemptive acts on earth; during the second six months with His present redeeming activities from heaven through us, His Spirit-indwelt witnesses.

# The Relation of the Bible to Science*

*by Clifton J. Orlebeke*

HOW MIGHT A CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHER, addressing a group of Canadian students and ultimately the general public, discuss most profitably "The Relation of the Bible to Science"? With a topic so rich, his greatest problem would no doubt be one of selection, rather than of finding something to say.

There is the question of definition, for instance. When the authority of science is claimed for a statement, most people will listen with respect. When "scientists" turn up some bit of evidence or propose some new theory which seems to square poorly with the Scriptures, those Christians who take intellectual matters seriously will have a new source of tension in their lives. Now, in view of this undoubted weight which attaches to the deliverances of science in mid-twentieth century, it is essential that we come to understand precisely what science *is*. Who speaks for science? If science gives us knowledge, is it a special kind of knowledge? How does one distinguish genuine science from sham? These, and other questions like them, might well serve as foci for the philosopher's discourse.

Closely related to the foregoing is the general topic of specialized languages. The layman who inquires into contemporary science, especially physics, soon discerns that what scientists deem to be meaningful talk (e.g., Einstein's, "Not every extended entity in the four-dimensional world can be regarded as composed of world-lines") can be fit only with great difficulty into the language we use to describe daily experience. How, then, shall we relate this technical language to *biblical* statements — which themselves are of diverse sorts and are expressed in antique tongues?

Finally — to note just one more option the philosopher could choose — there is a respectable tradition in Western thought which goes under the name "philosophy of nature." Here the attempt is made to enunciate general propositions about nature in the light of even more basic doctrines which, for the Christian, are founded upon the Scriptures. Studies in the philosophy of nature have been made by the Catholic Jacques Maritain, the Calvinist Valentine Hepp, the American evangelical Bernard Ramm, and have been advocated as urgent business by Carl F. H. Henry as recently as 1959.[1]

READERS OF DR. VAN RIESSEN'S lectures will note that he chooses none of these alternatives. In the first place, he passes over the problem of the relation of the Bible to science as it is usually understood. Most people, when they encounter this topic, think first of all about the seventeenth-century conflict between (e.g.) Galileo and the Church regarding the Copernican astronomical scheme, or about the

* A review of four lectures given by Hendrick Van Riessen at the first Study Conference of the Association for Reformed Scientific Studies in Canada and published along with the lectures given by Allan L. Farris and H. Evan Runner at the same Conference. The three sets of lectures comprise the book *Christian Perspectives* 1960 (Pella, Iowa: Pella Publishing, Inc., 1960).

1. Respectively: *Philosophy of Nature* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1951); *Calvinism and the Philosophy of Nature* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1930); *The Christian View of Science and Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1954), ch. 3; *Evolution and Christian Thought Today*, ed. R. Mixter (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959), p. 220.

acrimonious debates between evolutionists and religious leaders in the nineteenth century. For many Christians of those periods, the issue was joined because the new scientific cosmology did not square with *biblical* cosmology. No doubt they were at least partially mistaken in so believing; at least in the twentieth century we have had to become more sophisticated in how we relate biblical statements to scientific theories. The point is, however, that Van Riessen does not expose the mistakes of the past, or show how we may avoid them today. He assumes — as must all Christians — that God does not reveal inconsistent things in His creation and in His Word; but he does not analyze any instances where this article of faith seems to be challenged.

Second, Van Riessen surprises the reader by taking an unexpectedly broad view of science. For him, "science" includes both the natural and cultural sciences, the whole area of "scholarship and learning." "I need," he says, "a term which covers the whole field in which scientific method is used . . . . The distinction between [natural and cultural sciences] I consider to be of secondary importance."

Of course Van Riessen's definition of "science" is entirely acceptable in terms of etymology and usage, although contemporary idiom usually limits the term to the experimental sciences of nature and to those other disciplines that attempt to emulate their method. But the reader will wonder, offhand, why Van Riessen chose to overlap the assigned topic of his colleague in the Study Conference, Dr. H. Evan Runner, who lectured on "The Relation of the Bible to Learning." It appears that Van Riessen is not wholly of one mind in the definition of his subject: on the one hand, he clearly wants to say some weighty things about science in the distinctively modern sense; on the other hand, he denies in effect that there *is* a distinctively modern sense. It is instructive that nowhere does he explain what he means by the scientific method, and that in his chief reference to the experimental method he says (confusingly) that it advanced and furthered science because it replaced speculation, and that it became the basis of science. If experiment is now the basis of science, was the earlier speculation also science in the same sense? If not, how did experiment advance it?

VAN RIESSEN STATES his thesis in the introductory lecture. "Most scientists and scholars," he says, "insist on the *neutrality* and *objectivity* of science. Thereby they claim that science is not influenced or affected by human sentiments, faith, or pre-determined views of life." Van Riessen wishes to refute this doctrine that science is objective and neutral. "If this thesis . . . should not be true, then science will always be determined by *faith*. In that case the Christian approach to science will not only be useful but obligatory." Van Riessen avers that a scientist without God cannot "produce essentially correct knowledge," although "such knowledge cannot be altogether bad"; ". . . [for science] the differences in faith are decisive."

It should be noted that "the Christian approach to science" — a notion which is never really made concrete — does not mean only that the Christian applies the results of science uniquely, or that only the Christian understands why the scientific enterprise is possible, or that the Christian has a different motivation for doing science. According to Van Riessen, faith "affects science from within." "The faith that inspires [the scientist] inspires him precisely in his particular direction of scientific research, a direction that corresponds to and meets his expectations." Elsewhere he says that "faith . . . inspires the mind in its choice and development of methods [and] hypotheses . . . ."

From these statements the reader must conclude that for Van Riessen all scientists are religiously biased to the degree that all of their theories must be classed as either Christian or non-Christian. He will not allow the existence of a method that abstracts from religious commitment; he appears even to say that scientists are (perhaps unconsciously) so governed by their "faith" that they will always arrive at the conclusions that they assumed beforehand to be true. There must be "no surrender to the 'neutrality' notion"; we must not talk about science as such, but rather about the two opposing sciences, namely, the Christian and the secular brands.

These lectures emphasize most strongly Van Riessen's negative thesis, that science is not "neutral" or "objective." This is the main thrust of his second lecture ("The History of Scientific Thought"), his third lecture ("The Power and The Crisis of Science"), and part of the fourth ("Christian Faith and Science"). Along the way he takes note of modern movements in applied science and social planning, and discusses the limitations of scientific thought. The last section of the fourth (concluding) lecture is devoted to the positive role of Christian faith in science.

UNFORTUNATELY, VAN RIESSEN'S refutation of scientific neutrality is not well focused. Speaking of the beginnings of science, for instance, he urges that the Greeks were motivated not primarily by wonder and curiosity, as Plato said, but by a desire to become independent of God. They wanted a method which would be "independent of all faith and beliefs," in other words, "neutral." Thomism perpetuated this "apostasy" by distinguishing the natural realm from the supernatural. Humanism and positivism absolutized the neutral scientific method, thus sowing the seeds of contemporary irrationalism and nihilism.

Now all of this is very interesting, but it is more an interpretation of philosophic history than it is of scientific. One looks in vain for mention of the Greek scientist Archimedes, or of Pythagoras, or of Euclid; instead we find Parmenides, Heraclitus, and Democritus. No one denies that the Greeks did not distinguish science from philosophy as we do, or that Greek philosophy was closely tied to Greek science, or that Greek philosophy was non-Christian. But supposing that we take "science" in the modern sense, how does this history help us to appraise (e.g.) Archimedes' Principle as being Christian or secular? Van Riessen simply makes an obvious point, that Greek thought in general requires basic criticism from the Christian point of view, without showing how this proves anything about the alleged religious bifurcation of scientific theory as we now understand it. Instead, he capitalizes on his broad definition of "science" to make the transition seem plausible. Or does he really want to say that Archimedes' Principle is part and parcel of Greek "neutralism," and therefore unacceptable to the Christian?

In the third lecture, Van Riessen holds up contemporary physics as a demonstration that science "depends on subjective factors." The point here is that classical (Newtonian) physics has been superseded by relativity and quantum theory: whereas classical mechanics had supposed that there was an objective space and time framework which allowed absolute measurements of these quantities, relativity theory holds that such measurements depend upon the movement of the observer with respect to the object measured; and whereas classical concepts of body, cause, and the like were quite analogous to common usage, quantum physics requires that we think of elementary particles as being rather unlike ordinary physical objects. (For instance, we cannot speak meaningfully of an electron's having simultaneously a determinate position and velocity.) Some interpreters of these developments agree with Van Riessen that they imply a kind of subjectivism: in observing or measuring, man always influences the process which he observes, and therefore he cannot get at the process by itself. But surely Van Riessen does not think that the subjective factor involved in making physical measurements implies anything about religion operative in science. In this part of the argument Van Riessen seems to identify religious neutralism in physics with the Newtonian scheme of bodies acting by determinate causes in absolute space and time, and then proceeds to watch them fall together. Should we infer, then, that Einstein's and Heisenberg's physics is more Christian than Newton's because it has refuted "neutrality"?

In the forth lecture, Van Riessen points out that scientists select and interpret facts, and offers several books in the social sciences as examples.[2] The authors of these books, he says, have biases not always known even to themselves, but these biases can be discovered by reading between the lines or by examining carefully the last few pages of the argument. It turns out that the facts cited by these authors as scientific evidence are precisely the ones that would support their hidden assumptions.

Here again, Van Riessen's exact argument is hard to discern. That scientists formulate hypotheses which they seek to test, is well known; in this sense they make assumptions. Also, the formulation of these hypotheses is a *creative* process; there is no straightforward logic by which hypotheses can be extracted from "bare facts." This feature of the scientific process has become widely recognized only recently, and it contradicts the impression left by classical writers on induction such as Bacon and Mill. C. A. Coulson gives the modern view, in a rather extreme form, when he says, ". . . these patterns [of science] are mental constructs of our own, and their ultimate sanction is that they do fit together."[3] If this is what Van Riessen wishes to say — that scientific hypotheses must be constructed by human minds and not merely drawn from "facts," then he is correct. But he fails to show that the criterion of verifiability limits the form of such hypotheses, and that it also provides one of the rules according to which they are confirmed or refuted. What is worse for Van Riessen's thesis is that he does not demonstrate how *religious* considerations must influence the formulation of hypotheses.

Finally, even the unquestioned bias of some scientific arguments, in which evidence is "stacked" and distorted to buttress preconceived conclusions, does not prove what Van Riessen wants to prove. Within the canons of science itself, the charge of bias is a damning one if it can be made to hold water. Therefore Van Riessen does not occupy distinctively Christian ground when he points — no doubt justifiably — to examples of it. The scientific method is designed expressly to minimize dishonest or careless manipulation of data for the sake of personal predilections; that is why many call it, in this sense, "objective"; and that is why Van Riessen himself can claim a hearing when he alleges that Burnham's book "is not based upon indisputable facts."

It is interesting to notice, in passing, that Van Riessen's own argument is not unlike those that he holds up for criticism. His thesis is that *all* of science exhibits religious faith in its inner workings; but without exception his examples of reli-

2. Homans, *The Human Group;* Ortega y Gasset, *The Revolt of the Masses;* Burnham, *The Managerial Revolution.*
3. Coulson, *Science & Christian Belief* (London: Fontana Books, 1958), p. 50.

gious bias are taken from those sciences (of man and society) whose reputations are least established, whose theories are most difficult to formulate rigorously and test experimentally, and which, therefore, are least deserving of the name "sciences" in the strict sense. Perhaps this does not matter; perhaps it is not important to try out the general principle on different kinds of science; but Van Riessen might well have kept in mind Francis Bacon's admonition about the value of negative instances.

THE MAIN DIFFICULTY with these lectures, as I have suggested, is that Van Riessen's discussion does not cohere well with his thesis. Hence one begins to wonder precisely what he wants to say. For example, after criticizing psychologists who assert as a fact that the behavior and attitude of workers in a factory are motivated by their basic needs (which seems almost a tautology), he warns that "such a statement is always suspect . . . . Such a selected and interpreted fact, stated without substantial evidence, is not at all neutral and only partly true" because no human being has lost wholly the image of God. The latter assertion is true; but what does this mean for the science of psychology? Are there empirical data which these psychologists should have taken into account, but didn't? Then the Christian criticism should be that they haven't followed the canons of science, and the Christian approach to science would amount to being *more* objective in the sense of being more open to all the data than are the secularists. Or is it that the empirical method followed by these psychologists has inherent limitations, so that their results need only to be supplemented by Christian insights? Though Van Riessen discusses the limitations of science, and says that "science gives a specific and therefore limited kind of knowledge," he apparently would shrink from this conclusion. Elsewhere he asserts that all specific meanings are relative to all other specific meanings, which presumably means that one cannot have true knowledge of the part unless he has a proper religious view of the whole.

The issue is obscured further by certain statements that appear in the last lecture. There Van Riessen says that "every science will yield valid results because it concerns itself with *reality*"; that, because of common grace, every scientist will at least partly respect God's laws in his knowledge; that the non-neutrality of science "does not demand the affirmation that in every part of science observable contrasts always exist. In some fields and on some levels no difference at all will be observed." And finally, in an inference which escapes this reviewer, Van Riessen asks rhetorically whether the religious approach makes any difference in weighing and measuring, and answers as follows: "Let us remember that even if one cannot prove a difference between two nails, this does not exclude the possibility of a very real difference between the two persons having these nails."

Let it simply be observed that Van Riessen leaves the matter here. The reader is not told what these levels are, why they exhibit no difference, or why these admissions do not contradict his main thesis. Rather, the Christian faith "primarily and principially requires us simply to *believe* that we are thus on the road to truth . . . . Let this never disturb you, as it sometimes disturbs our people in the Netherlands, that we cannot always, or even clearly prove that the Christian approach to science makes a difference. This is not decisive."

WHERE CLEAR ANALYSIS is lacking, one can nevertheless discern attitudes which the speaker conveys to his hearers. Explicitly, the attitude that Van Riessen encourages us to have is dedication to the cause of Christ and His kingdom in the field of science. There should be no compromise with evil, no inconsistency of intellectual approach with religious conviction, no uncritical absorption of false philosophies. Insofar as the speaker has inspired his audience to these high ideals, he has done his work well.

But this does not exhaust Van Riessen's message. By continually pounding at scientific claims to have found a method of discovery as honest, ingenious, and self-critical as humanity has ever devised; by suggesting that science has its historical roots in religious rebellion; by continually confusing the scientific method with erroneous philosophical interpretations and immoral uses of it; by advocation that Christians should never do science quite as others do it — by all of these devices Van Riessen inculcates, however unwittingly, a suspicion and even an antipathy toward science as we find it concretely manifested today. *This* science is not distinctively Christian, even though it contains "partial truth"; *our* science ought to be different, but we are not told how. Therefore perhaps we, as Christians, ought not to get involved at all.

If such be the impression gained from these lectures, it is to be regretted. Science is not a substitute for God, though many may think so; but neither is it engaged in a contest against God, though sinners are. Science is a gift of God. Through the combined efforts of unnumbered thousands, it has disclosed many secrets of the universe and opened many more avenues for future research. The servants of God do well to get on with the job.

# *The Argument from Revelation to Infallibility*

*by Dewey J. Hoitenga, Jr.*

IN MY LAST ARTICLE I tried to show that the infallibility of the Bible cannot be established on the basis of its claim to divine inspiration. I said that "infallibility" and "inspiration" must be clearly distinguished from each other as answers to two different questions, namely, "What is the truth-status of the Bible?" and "How did the Bible come into being?" There is still, however, another important question that may be asked about the Bible. This is the question, "What is the Bible?" and the religious answer to this question gives us a third concept, one that is to be distinguished from "infallibility" and "inspiration," namely the concept of "revelation," or in common language, the Word of God.

In the present article I would like to propose and examine, by comparison and contrast with the argument from inspiration, and by reference to the teaching of John Calvin on the subject, the argument for infallibility from revelation, that is from the Bible's being the Word of God. I want to do this because I believe that such an examination will reveal that this argument is the only one that can provide the firm basis for infallibility that we need. By way of conclusion I would further like to suggest that it be upon this argument, not upon the one from inspiration, that we begin allowing the "phenomena of Scripture" to shed their light.

## I. The Argument Stated

Let me first of all clearly set forth what I understand the argument to be. In its briefest form the argument is: Scripture is the word of God, therefore scripture is infallible. In this form the argument has only one premise: "Scripture is the word of God." But a deductive argument involves at least two premises, one of which, though assumed, is often not expressed. That other premise in this case is this: "God in all his words and deeds is infallible." Hence the argument in complete logical form:

> God in all his words and deeds is infallible;
> Scripture is his word (his revelation);
> Therefore: Scripture is infallible.

No one, I think, will care to dispute the validity of this argument; if the two premises are accepted, the conclusion follows with logical necessity. So if the conclusion is the one we want to prove, this argument would seem to give us the right premises with which to do it. I believe it can be shown that both of these premises *as premises* are indeed the proper foundation upon which to build the infallibility of the Bible.

## II. The First Premise

The major premise in this argument is the assertion that God is infallible in all that he says and does. The necessity and adequacy of this assertion as the ultimate foundation of any argument for the infallibility of scripture has, it will be recalled, already been discussed in the previous article. It is what John Calvin had in mind also, I believe, when he wrote, "The principle proof, therefore, of the Scriptures is everywhere derived from the character of the Divine Speaker" (*Institutes*, I, vii, 4). The two arguments — the argument from inspiration and the argument from revelation — agree in coming to rest in this premise as the one that provides the concept of infallibility in the first place. It is not in this premise, then, that the important difference between the two arguments is to be seen. Let us therefore proceed to an examination of the second premise.

## III. The Second Premise

The second premise of the argument being considered is the assertion that the Bible is a divine revelation, that the Bible is the word of God. What we must ask about this premise, as we did about the minor premise in the argument from inspiration, are the two questions: Is it indubitable? and if so, how does it receive its indubitable character? We would all agree, I assume, that this premise is beyond doubt. It is not the assertion made in this premise, at any rate, that has been in dispute among us; indeed, I fear it has been neglected in our discussions of infallibility. It seems to me, however, that without the truth of this assertion the infallibility of the Bible can never be established. Only if this assertion should ever come into dispute will infallibility be questioned with any real profundity, for this is the crucial premise in any argument that begins with the infallibility of God and ends in the infallibility of the Bible.

If we agree that this premise is indubitable, the revealing question to ask ourselves is, how does it receive this indubitable character? Why does this premise — if we will begin to use it rather than the one asserting the inspiration of scripture — lie beyond all doubt among us? An answer that might suggest itself is, "Because the Bible itself claims to be the word of God." If we give this answer, the answer will resemble the one we gave when, during our use of the argument from inspiration, we were asked how we knew the Bible had been divinely inspired. If we give this answer, however, the answer will also resemble that other in

presupposing the truth of scriptural texts in defense of which the premise is put forth as a foundation. If we give this answer, that is, the whole argument to infallibility from scripture's being the word of God is as fallacious (*petitio principii*) as the argument from its being divinely inspired. I am not denying, of course, that texts can be found asserting that scripture, or at least specific portions of it, is the word of God; what I am rejecting is the citation of this fact as the basis for holding that the Bible is indeed the word of God. If such citation were the way to answer the question, the infallibility of the *Qur'ān, The Book of Mormon,* and numerous other "sacred books" in addition to the Bible could easily be established. The proof that the Bible is the word of God can never be had from the Bible itself. There is a sense in which there can not even be a convincing "argument from revelation" — the phrase is profoundly ambiguous.

Now in the case of the argument from inspiration, it will be remembered, we were forced nevertheless to do just this, to invoke scripture itself as the basis for a premise we were using to establish scripture's infallibility, simply because there was no other source of information on the question of the process by which it came into being. But are we so limited in the present argument? Is there no other answer we can give to the question, "Why is the Bible God's word?" than to cite a text? There is another possible answer, an answer which is the only one, in my opinion, that we may respectably (and responsibly) give, and the only one which can possibly provide the indubitability for the assertion that it requires for use as a premise in the argument. That is the answer that would arise from an experience, and from an experience alone; the experience, namely, that we have ourselves heard in scripture the word of God. If we have not heard God himself speak to us in the Bible, we have no basis for, nor even any right to, the claim that it is indeed the word of God.

It should be observed that this answer from present experience can never be given to establish the premise in the argument from inspiration which asserts the divine inspiration of the Bible. It can never be given for the simple reason that the inspiration of the human authors of the Bible, even if it be a true account of how the Bible came into existence, is completely outside the possibility of our experience, not only because it must have occurred rather subtly in the lives of men other than ourselves, but also because it occurred in the lives of men who lived long ago. If the Bible account of inspiration is true, we must know this on some ground other than our personal experience of the event to which it refers. On the other hand, the answer from experience is just the kind that is needed in answer to the question, Why do we believe the Bible to be the word of God? I see no other answer available than that we as a matter of fact hear him speak there — and this is clearly the language of experience.

### IV. Calvin's Teaching

This answer from experience is so important that I would like to discuss it further by referring to Calvin's classic account of the authority of scripture (*Institutes,* I, vii). I would like to show first that Calvin's account is very certain and clear on the necessity of a present religious experience as the foundation of our accepting the authority of the Bible, and second that his account is less satisfying, at least in this section of the *Institutes,* on the question as to just what this experience concerns.

Calvin's account is exceptionally clear on the necessity of a present religious experience as the foundation for our accepting the authority of the Bible. His terms for this experience include "testimony of the Spirit," "illumination of the Spirit," and the term "revelation" itself. This "testimony" Calvin sets forth in a polemical context against the view prevailing in his time that we can be persuaded of scriptural authority by the church. Opposing this view he writes: "This persuasion must be sought from a higher source than human reasons, or judgments, or conjectures — even from the secret testimony of the Spirit" (I, vii, 4). That this testimony is indeed a present experience in the lives of those who receive it is manifest from the following excerpts:

> It is necessary, therefore, that the same Spirit, who spake by the mouths of the prophets, should penetrate into our hearts (I, vii, 4).
>
> For though it conciliate our reverence by its internal majesty, it [scripture] never seriously affects us till it is confirmed by the Spirit in our hearts (5).
>
> It [the persuasion of scriptural authority] is, finally, such a sentiment as cannot be produced but by a revelation from heaven. I speak of nothing but what every believer experiences in his heart (5).

Calvin is less satisfying, in my opinion, on just what is revealed in this experience, on just what we are persuaded to believe by the testimony. Though he distinguishes between the present revelation and the past inspiration, he does not in this section relate the present revelation directly to the scriptures as we presently read them, but rather to the scriptures as the prophets and apostles wrote them in the past. Calvin presents the authority of the scriptures as we presently read them as derived from the fact that the prophets and apostles were inspired by God to write them in the past, and this fact is vouchsafed to us by the testimony or revelation:

> But since we are not favoured with daily oracles from heaven, and since it is only in the Scriptures that the Lord hath been pleased to preserve his truth in perpetual remembrance, it obtains the same complete

> credit and authority with believers, when they are satisfied of its divine origin, as if they heard the very words pronounced by God himself (1).

Calvin clearly presupposes the distinction between the past inspiration ("divine origin") and the present hearing of God's word by those who read or hear the scriptures ("as if they heard the very words pronounced by God himself").

> The same thing is true in the following passage: Therefore, being illuminated by him, we now believe the divine original of the Scripture, not from our own judgment or that of others, but we esteem the certainty, that we have received it from God's own mouth by the ministry of men, to be superior to that of any human judgment, and equal to that of an intuitive perception of God himself in it (5).

Here again Calvin operates with the distinction between "believing the divine original of the Scripture" and having "an intuitive perception of God himself in it" — between belief about a past event and engagement in a present experience. The words he uses, in this passage and the preceding one, to relate these two ("as if" and "equal to") would seem to imply equal status to them. This is not really what Calvin teaches, however; what he teaches is that the latter (the present hearing) is based upon acknowledging the former (the past inspiration). This is manifest from the most outstanding feature of his whole account here, namely, that the "testimony of the Spirit," the "revelation from heaven," is related not to the latter (our present hearing of scripture) but to the former (our belief concerning the past inspiration). Take for example part of the last quotation above: "Therefore, being illuminated by him, we now believe the divine original of scripture." Consider also the following passage:

> Religion appearing, to profane men, to consist wholly in opinion, in order that they may not believe any thing on foolish or slight grounds, they wish and expect it to be proved by rational arguments, that Moses and the prophets spake by divine inspiration. But I reply, that the testimony of the Spirit is superior to all reason. For as God alone is a sufficient witness of himself in his own word, so also the word will never gain credit in the hearts of men, till it be confirmed by the internal testimony of the Spirit. It is necessary, therefore, that the same Spirit, who spake by the mouths of the prophets, should penetrate into our hearts, to convince us that they faithfully delivered the oracles which were divinely intrusted to them (4; cf. his *Commentary* on II Timothy 3:16 for a similar account).

My difficulty with Calvin's account is not with his insistence on the necessity, for the acceptance of scripture, of a present "revelation from heaven"; I too am convinced that without this there will be no such acceptance. My difficulty concerns Calvin's answer to the question, *What is* revealed from heaven? *To what* does the Spirit testify? Calvin's answer is that the Spirit testifies to the occurrence of a past event (inspiration), not that the Spirit testifies in a present reading or hearing experience (revelation); that the testimony is *to* the Bible, not *in* and *with* it. Calvin may be defended, I suppose, by pointing out that he does after all recognize God speaking to us *in* scripture as the final result of the process initiated by the testimony. This is indeed true; Calvin does recognize and even insist upon this, as some of the passages already cited show. And it may also be said, in further defense of Calvin, that we should refer to his other discussion of the relation between the Bible and the Spirit in chapter ix. In that chapter his purpose is to reject "the fanaticism which discards Scripture, under the pretense of resorting to immediate revelations." That chapter, even though a brief one, seems to me as important an account of the authority of scripture as chapter vii. In that chapter he writes:

> For the Lord hath established a kind of mutual connection between the certainty of his word and of his Spirit; so that our minds are filled with a solid reverence for the word, when by the light of the Spirit we are enabled therein to behold the Divine countenance; and, on the other hand, without the least fear of mistake, we gladly receive the Spirit, when we recognize him in his image, that is, in the word (I, ix, 3).

It appears to me that this statement, taken by itself, may be regarded as an account of the authority of scripture on the basis of a present hearing of God speaking in its pages, an account that may therefore be contrasted with the previous account in Calvin of the authority of scripture on the basis of a past inspiration of God directing its authors. Nevertheless, it does not seem to be the characteristic way in which Calvin proceeds, in general, to defend the authority of scripture. His characteristic way seems instead to regard this present hearing in scripture of the word of God as the final result of an initial testimony to the divine inspiration of that scripture.

Calvin's order is: testimony, inspiration, scripture as the word of God. The Spirit's testimony is certainly a present one, but it is not *directly* related to our present reading or hearing of scripture; what it *directly* concerns is our belief concerning inspiration, a past event; and this, in turn, provides the warrant for our calling the Bible, in our present reading or hearing of it, the word of God. Now this order, even though it recognizes the primacy of a present revelation, suggests nevertheless that the inspiration of its past authors is the fundamental premise to be established, not its being the present word of God to men. It suggests this because inspiration is regarded as the item that needs the initial testimony, not the present function of the Bible as the word of God, God speaking to us. The

main thesis of the present and the former article has been, by contrast with this, that the truth-status, authority, or infallibility of the Bible cannot be established on *how* the Bible claims to have come into existence (inspiration) but rather on *what* the Bible is for our present religious experience (the word of God, divine revelation). I have been insisting that these are two quite different arguments, and that one is a good one, the other not.

I think it is understandable that we might (as Calvin did) tend to relate these two arguments closely together and even ground *what* the Bible is for us upon *how* it came into being. It is understandable because both ways view the Bible as having its origin in God. Whether God inspired the writers or whether he speaks in scripture to us, in either case he may be called the author or origin of it. But this similarity should not obscure for us the radical difference between the function of the two assertions *as premises* in an argument that attempts to conclude the infallibility of scripture. When inspiration is used as the premise, it must be based on a text of scripture such as II Timothy 3:16, thereby presupposing the reliability of something that was to be proved. As was suggested in the previous article, however, there must, in this argument, have been some other way of establishing the truth of II Timothy 3:16. This other way, to take a suggestion from Calvin, can only be a "secret testimony," a unique and present "revelation from heaven." But, as was also suggested, if this way is available to establish the truth of II Timothy 3:16, it may certainly be relied upon to establish any other part of the Bible as well. It would have been the foundation for the authority of scripture even if scripture had contained *no* teachings as to the process by which it came to be written! And this is the fundamental point about the illumination of the Spirit, the basic religious experience in the Christian religion, in so far as it bears upon its sacred book, that comes out unambiguously neither in Calvin nor in his orthodox followers to the present day. That the illumination or revelation of the Spirit, as the sole prerequisite for the acceptance of the authority of the Bible, is a continuously present one, is a point on which Calvin is abundantly clear. But that this illumination comes not primarily in a contemplation of the process by which scripture was originally produced, but primarily in and with the actual reading and hearing of scripture, is a point which Calvin's distinctive teaching about the authority of scripture must, in my opinion, leave us somewhat disappointed — in spite of all that his patronizing neo-orthodox interpreters have been saying to the contrary.

### Conclusion

I conclude, then, that the deductive argument from the Bible's being for us a present divine revelation (the present word of the living God) is the only argument to use if we wish to establish the Bible's infallibility. The argument is successful because the assertions that serve as its premises can be established both with complete certainty and with complete independence of the conclusion that is to be proved. The divine infallibility, that is, of the first premise has the certainty of a definition, of a logical analysis of the content of the term "God"; and the divine revelation of the second premise has the certainty of an actual experience. I conclude, therefore, that the truth-status (infallibility) of the Bible is to be established not by invoking a description of the process whereby the Bible claims to have come into existence (inspiration), but by invoking an experience that *we* claim to have when reading Scripture or hearing it read (revelation).

If I am right in this conclusion, then the crucial assertion in our whole set of beliefs about scripture and its infallibility is that scripture is the word of God. It follows from this that it is upon this assertion, and upon infallibility as a deduction from this assertion, that we must begin to allow, as Dr. Smedes has urged, the light of the "phenomena of scripture" to fall. Just what the outcome would be for our understanding of scripture and its role in our religious faith is a little hard to predict, for it is the kind of procedure to which, until the present, we have not been well accustomed. But some of the things we would come to appreciate as never before are clear enough. One thing, for example, that would impress us anew is that the Bible is not from beginning to end a sustained decalog, prophetic oracle, or sermon on the mount, supplying us the divine imperatives that constitute the foundation of our religious and moral life. We would find many other, different literary forms and types: fables, riddles, allegories, ancient civil legislation, secular proverbs, nature poetry, secular history and historical references, prayers, dark and problematic prophecies — these, as well as the decalog and the teachings of Jesus are among the phenomena of scripture. And what light would a new appreciation of this fact shed upon our basic claim that the Bible is divine revelation, the word of God?

This is the question that we have not, in my opinion, seriously been asking ourselves. But because I see that this claim is our only respectable defense of scriptural authority and because I see the relevance of the "phenomena of scripture" to this claim, I would like to urge that it be here we begin to focus all of our theological and philosophical, literary and historical, critical and religious faculties in elaborating an orthodox doctrine of scriptural infallibility which will be adequate for these times and free from the oversimplifications that have sometimes detracted from its significance.

# BOOK REVIEW

## PRESSURE TOWARD CONFORMITY. A review of *the Social Sources of Church Unity* by Robert Lee (New York: Abingdon, 1960).

*Reviewed by* Elco H. Oostendorp

Though not of the world, the church is in the world and therefore cannot escape its influence. Christianity has been a tremendous molding force in the world, but it must be admitted that society has molded the church, in which Christianity comes to formal organization. Just as psychology cannot explain in terms of "science" the supernatural aspects of such religious experiences as conversion, so also sociology cannot account for the most basic factors in the churches' life. Yet sociology can contribute much to our understanding of the churches. It is especially when the churches lose the Spirit, which "turns the world upside down," and retain only "a form of godliness" while "denying the power thereof" that social considerations become very important, and that sociology can give truly significant explanations of phenomena.

Viewed in this perspective Dr. Lee's book is a very interesting and suggestive contribution. It is "an interpretation of unitive forces and movements in American Protestantism." Taking his cue from Dr. H. Richard Niebuhr's classic, *The Social Sources of Denominationalism* (1929), the author indicates how the forces there discussed are losing force and being replaced by tendencies toward unity. With the disappearance of the frontier, the assimilation of immigrant groups, and the wiping out of social differences, many of the factors which led to fragmentation have dropped away, and new conditions prevail. No doubt ideological and theological factors are also prominent in the ecumenical movement, but at the grassroots sociological trends play a more significant role.

The *Social Sources of Church Unity* is divided into three parts. Part I outlines "the emerging unity of American society." Chapter 1 mentions some areas in which once prominent social differences — race, class, sectionalisms, and nationalism — are being reduced. Chapter 2 deals with signs of growing cultural unity. Six signs are discussed: mass communications, common values, styles of life, mutual dependence, organizational revolution, and cultural symbols. These set the stage for the growing unity in the church. The factors that apply here also affect the Christian Reformed Church since it is living in this same social milieu. We cannot escape the trends, even though we are holding aloof from many of the signs of church unity described in Part II.

In Part II, "The Signs of Church Unity," such ecumenical agencies and tendencies as church councils, mergers and reunions, community-centered churches, and the comity process come in for factual and detailed analysis in the light of the social situation outlined in Part I. A member of the Christian Reformed community can hardly escape feeling how completely most of these ecumenical programs have by-passed his denomination. In the beginning we were in the Federal Council, but soon withdrew. The action of the Synod of 1960 regarding the National Association of Evangelicals and the World Presbyterian Alliance shows that we are still minded to avoid entangling alliances. On the other hand, experience with the Theological College of Northern Nigeria and other mission projects at home and abroad teaches us that we are compelled to face the issues involved. As we become more actively a part of the national ecclesiastical picture we will have to choose our course with increasing self-consciousness. As cultural differences fall away, our isolation, if persisted in, will need to be one of doctrinal distinctiveness, reflected in our practice as well as our thought.

Part III contains two chapters, "The Countervailing Movements," and "Concluding Postscript." The former is of special interest to us because we are strong on denominational distinctiveness. We do not, however, want to be fundamentalistic or sectarian. A special section is devoted to the Southern Baptists, whose phenomenal growth independently of all ecumenical relations seems to belie the main thesis of the book. The author contends that this may be explained as reaction, the efforts of an old order to maintain itself, and that even within that denomination the pressure to conformity is heavy and increasingly effective.

Having just returned from the recent synodical meeting of the Christian Reformed Church, and being privileged in this year to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of my ordination as minister in our denomination, I found that the reading of the books referred to above offered interesting lines for reflection. Dr. Niebuhr mentions the Christian Reformed Church in discussing the effects of immigration upon denominationalism. He suggests that our break with the Reformed Church was largely a sociological reaction of a new immigrant group versus an old established "American" church, and he gives many parallels in other national churches, notably German, both Lutheran and Reformed.

We tend so easily to forget that we have only recently ceased to be a "Dutch" church. It comes almost as a a shock to realize that in 1930, a year after Dr. Niebuhr wrote, our Synod was still opened with a Dutch address and much of the official business, and no doubt an even greater part of the discussion by the elders and older ministers, was in the language of the fathers. Now it is only where there is a large concentration of recent immigrants that Dutch services are held. During 1959 the last two such services conducted in the Holland-Zeeland area were discontinued.

The coming of many new immigrants both to Canada and the United States has temporarily retarded this process. But the situation is quite different than it was in the past. The representatives of our seven Canadian classes use English very well. During my five years (1950-1955) in Canada I witnessed the breathtaking speed of the process of Canadianization. Of course, this is more than a matter of language, and no doubt there will be something

of a crisis in adjustment as the predominately immigrant churches find their place among us. The prevailingly different social situation will accelerate the process. Moreover, these new members, even before they immigrated, experienced many changes in the homeland, so that in some respects they are ahead of the main body of our churches in the area of ecumenical relationships.

The Christian Reformed Church roots in "separatism." True, our forefathers resented the charge of sectarianism and insisted that they did not really separate from the true Reformed Church, but rather were its continuation. They did not want to be known as the "Afgescheidenen." At the same time, however, it cannot be denied that they were in fact often separatistic in spirit. Denominational distinctions were very sharp in the early days. This is but to say that the very *raison d' etre* (reason for existing) of our denomination is in diametrical opposition to the prevailing tendency of our day. As long as that "afgescheiden" character was bolstered by social forces it could be maintained with a degree of success; now that social factors begin to operate in another direction we shall have to examine our foundations very thoroughly.

A great social change is taking place among us too. Only thirty years ago most of our people were either farmers or day laborers. Very few were educated beyond the grades, and many of our young people who did receive higher education were lost to the Church because its low cultural level did not permit expression of their artistic talents. It is significant in that connection that Ottawa County and Western Michigan generally, where our people form a large percentage of the population, are appreciably below the rest of the State in percentage of college students. (Based on published statistics compiled for the proposed state Grand Valley College). Economic and social forces are rapidly changing that. Even in rural states like Iowa fewer folk are farming, and especially the young people are trekking to the cities.

The beautiful edifices our congregations are erecting testify to increasing economic and social "class." As we join the trend toward the suburbs we become more like our neighbors. Dr. Lee stresses again and again that "status seeking," the desire to "belong" and to be recognized because of one's excellence are potent forces in ecclesiastical circles too. Who can claim that we are free from them? Even in our most distinctive activities such as our schools and institutions of mercy, we seek recognition and are increasingly concerned with conformation to standards.

There are a few among us who still decry the baneful influence of television, but for the most part we have accepted all the present-day media of mass communication. It must seem strange to a younger generation to learn, for example, that in my youth my parents, along with many others, did not subscribe to a "worldly" daily newspaper. We are rapidly conforming. Even at Synod the status of big league baseball teams and the outcome of a championship prize fight were occasional topics of coffee-time conversation. Under social pressures our strict Sabbath observance and avoidance of certain forms of amusement are rapidly being modified. Our cultural level is rising with our growing economic prosperity, and since we do not have the size or resources to develop our own standards, we tend to conform to those of society in general. The pattern of modern society is one of "the mass man," where individuality counts for less and less and where "adjustment to society" has even become the dominant goal of the educative process.

Our denomination is indeed an island in the sea of American Protestantism. We are distinctive and have maintained that distinctiveness by our organizations. We have our "own" Bible, the American Standard Version of 1901, used now almost exclusively by us; our own hymnal, our own youth organizations, our own Sunday School lessons and papers. Above all, in areas of large concentration we have our own

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Christian schools, from kindergarten through high school, and beyond. We have built our fences strong and high, and God has blessed us richly in our distinctiveness and isolation. We have shunned the more liberal, or at best neo-orthodox, National Council; we have also remained aloof from fundamentalism as represented in the National Association of Evangelicals. At the same time by radio and other means of evangelization we are reaching out not only to the world, but to the Church as represented in these two organizations. Our voice is being heard. There is opportunity and need for our distinctive witness.

But — and that is the thrust of this essay — how really "distinctive" is our distinctiveness? Now that social factors which contributed so much to our development are very rapidly falling away, are we ready to stand on our heritage of Scriptural, confessional Reformed theology alone? Is our Calvinism as a "world and life view" sufficiently self-conscious and virile to maintain and to strengthen our Church in denominational existence? The pressure to conformity is growing by the day. Can we withstand it at the heart of our faith, where it really matters most, at the very root of our being as a Church? That is the life-and-death question to which developments of the next few years will give the answer.

# LETTERS TO THE JOURNAL

DEAR FRIEND AND BROTHER BOER:

It was no doubt a choice of kind providence that I should have the flu and be restricted to the house for some days just when the *Journal* appeared (March 1960). I read an article or two and then went to work on the subject of your article, "Ecumenicity and the Mission Field." Now I know, Harry, that you are most capable of pulling my leg or anyone else's, given the proper opportunity. However, I went over your article again and I have found a few differences and want to share a few ideas with you. Possibly you need this anyway since you are haremless (I did not say harmless), and, fortunately, your ideas must be shared in print. I suppose I should add for the protection of yourself and myself that we are very good friends, and have been over the years, although I can see the possibility of the bond being worn down to a thin strand if these fellow editors of yours print this without first sending it to Africa and back. I don't want them to send it there to you first, because I doubt if the body of this letter is strong enough to have a tail attached as is so often the case in periodicals when someone has the desire to share an idea on the same subject. I know I am going to point out areas of disagreement, but by now you know that even though friends, we have not always agreed. The area of ecumenicity is still in formation so we may have changing ideas of unity.

What started this letter off in the first place was what I should call the argument by inference in such a sentence as this, "There is going on . . . a movement of the Spirit . . . bringing about a belated recognition in the Church everywhere of the clear and unambiguous teaching of the Bible that the Church according to her nature is *one*. . . ." Then by the end of the next paragraph you are moralizing at me with a "fighting against God" quotation. Now I was with you until you finished that phrase on the Church — "as to her nature is one." I was hoping that you would show how this new and unambiguous teaching is grounded in the exegesis of the Word. I admit I may just be a mite slow in transferring your ideas, but I didn't catch this one.

I have always thought that such passages as Ephesians 4 and 5 taught that the Church is one, but that this oneness is spiritual. The comparison there is that a man and wife are one; if I use your idea it would add a rather unusual picture — not only a spiritual, but a visible unity. If I now change the argumentation to concentrate on the possibility in the illustration to uphold visible unity, I still must put spiritual unity first. In the argumentation of the meaning of the Creed and belief in one Church, you move too swiftly for the support of your weighty argument. The essence of the Church is not a visible unity under one — John 23 — but the possession in Christ. If that were not true, why should we have to say, "I believe in the Church"? We could say of the visible unity, "I see it," not "I believe it. . . . "

I have similar difficulty with a generalization which you do not substantiate, namely, that the biggest mistake of the Church was to regard Paul as a theologian and not as a missionary. Have we arrived at that point of seeking to divorce theology from mission for the sake of some practical device called visible unity? The statement mentioned is an unproven assertion; you may believe that to be true; but is it true that this is what the Church has done? Is it possible that the Church has sought to keep in its thinking the balance of theologian and missionary? The Apostle who has zeal for souls can also proceed with some rather close theological distinctions as in Romans on the subject of election and the like. I thought the argument weak at this point. I would have to shout loudly if I so argued in my sermons.

Now lest you think I have deserted you entirely, I want to assure you that we think we should hear more of what you are doing. We pray often for the blessing of God upon this nascent educational endeavor of our African brethren. We hear the distant reports of the rumblings of nationalism, and plead that strong foundations may be laid to stand before such tumult. The need for this unity for which you plead is much more real to you and to them than it is to us. The possibility of premature darkness settling on the Church horizon is incipient in the political maneuvers. If then the factors of unity on whatever level are able to unite them in the common cause of the kingdom of Christ, I cannot see how we can be too insistent that they follow our thinking or be accused of heretical tendency. It is just as possible for us to insist that the need in the American theological climate is doctrinal discrimination since without it we are in danger of losing the character of the Church of Christ. Once the Church in Africa has stood for one hundred years, there may be quite a difference in her outlook. This is not simply deserting theory for practice, but recognizing that one facet of the truth may stand out more clearly at one time than another. The applications of the Word do seem much more pertinent to an area of activity as the Spirit is leading the Church through dangers and trials.

I must finish this agreeing to disagree in the field of unity, for the vacation by default is over. The flu has flown and thus *auf Wiedersehen!*

*Sincerely yours,*
W. H. ACKERMAN
*Lynden, Washington*

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